



United States
Environmental Protection Agency
Region 2 NY, NJ, PR, VI
290 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10007-1866



New Jersey
Department of Environmental Protection
401 E. State St.
Trenton, N.J. 08625

NEWS

201783



Release: August 8, 1997
97/156

CONTACT: Loretta O'Donnell or EPA Rich Cahill
(609) 984-1795 or (212) 637-3665

FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORY ISSUED FOR NEW MARKET POND AND BOUND BROOK EPA FINDS ELEVATED PCB LEVELS

PISCATAWAY - Residents were advised today not to eat fish caught from the New Market Pond or Bound Brook due to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) findings of elevated polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) levels in sediments and fish samples.

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Bob Shinn and EPA Regional Administrator Jeanne Fox said the findings came as a result of EPA's ongoing off-site investigation of PCB contamination at the former Cornell-Dubilier Electronics site in the Hamilton Industrial Park in South Plainfield. The Bound Brook is adjacent to the site and flows through the New Market Pond downstream in Piscataway Township.

"We've agreed to issue this interim fish consumption advisory based on EPA's findings and recommendation. This action is being taken in consultation with New Jersey's Department of Health and Senior Services. New Jersey's interagency Toxics in Biota Committee will review these data and additional sampling by EPA," said DEP Commissioner Bob Shinn. The committee will then issue a formal advisory which will be included in periodic fishing digests and other public outreach programs.

EPA Regional Administrator Jeanne M. Fox announced that the Cornell Dubilier site will be proposed for the federal Superfund National Priorities List of hazardous waste sites sometime next month. "Once this site is on the NPL, it makes it possible for us to obtain sufficient funding to aggressively investigate the extent of the problem and other potential sources of this contamination," Fox said.

"We thank Commissioner Shinn and the State for their quick and decisive action in issuing a fish advisory for the New Market Pond and Bound Brook. It means that the people who enjoy fishing here can continue to do so, but they should not eat what they catch," Fox said.

The "do not eat the fish" advisory applies to the entire six-mile Bound Brook from its headwaters in Edison Township, just upstream of the Cornell Dubilier site, downstream through South Plainfield, Piscataway and Middlesex Borough to the confluence with the Green Brook.

(more)

PCB advisory, Bound Brook
add 1

EPA's results, which completed data validation this week, showed PCB levels up to 36 parts per million (ppm) in a carp filet from the New Market Pond and up to 12.2 ppm in a white sucker sample taken from a two-mile section of the Bound Brook downstream of the Cornell Dubilier site. The U. S. Food and Drug Administration advisory level for PCBs is 2 ppm. Four species of fish were sampled, carp, largemouth bass, white sucker and sunfish, from seven areas. A total of 48 fish samples were collected and analyzed for PCBs.

EPA has conducted additional sampling of Bound Brook, downstream and upstream of the Cornell Dubilier site, to delineate the extent of contamination. This sampling includes the Green Brook and Spring Lake.

PCBs are classified by EPA as probable cancer-causing substances in humans and may cause developmental effects in fetuses and children. PCBs are persistent in the environment and increase in concentration through the food chain.

Cornell Dubilier Electronics occupied the 25-acre site on Hamilton Boulevard from 1936-1962 during which time it manufactured capacitors and tested transformer oils. Presently, the Hamilton Industrial Park is occupied by an estimated 15 businesses.

A responsible party has taken interim actions at the park under order from EPA to safeguard the health of workers and area residents. Activities underway include paving of areas of known PCB contamination such as driveways and parking lots, drainage control measures and fencing to restrict access. These activities are scheduled for completion by the end of the summer.

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